

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method of selecting components for installation on a computer, the method comprising the acts of:

- 5 receiving a request for the upgrade of one or more components;
determining one or more system conditions regarding the computer; and
identifying one or more components for installation on the computer
based upon the request and the system conditions.

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10 2. The method of Claim 1, additionally comprising the act of receiving a configuration file that is associated with the request for the upgrade, the configuration file identifying said one or more components.

3. The method of Claim 2, additionally including the act of associating an expiration time with the configuration file.

15 4. The method of Claim 3, additionally comprising the acts of:
determining whether the expiration time indicates that the configuration file has expired; and
stopping the identification step upon the determination that the configuration has expired.

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20 5. The method of Claim 2, additionally comprising the act of sending the configuration file to a component server, the component server performing the identifying step.

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6. The method of Claim 2, additionally comprising the act of sending at least some of the contents of the configuration file to a component server, the component server performing the identifying step.

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25 7. The method of Claim 2, additionally comprising the act:
receiving a second configuration file having a format different than the received configuration file; and

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sending the second configuration file to a component server without reading with the client computer any part of the second configuration file differing in format from the received configuration file.

30 8. The method of Claim 2, additionally comprising storing the configuration file on a configuration server.

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9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the system conditions include the existence of one or more computer-readable modules on the computer.

10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the system conditions include a language that is associated with one or more computer-readable modules that reside on the computer.

11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the system conditions includes the type of operating system that is executing on the computer.

12. The method of Claim 1, additionally comprising the act of identifying one or more programs upon receiving the request, the one or more programs being associated with at least one of said one or more components.

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13. A computer system having a configuration subject to change over time, the system comprising:

a first computer having one or more system resources;

a second computer operably connected to the first computer, the second computer associated with one or more installable components;

a configuration file that is readable by the first computer, the configuration file identifying at least one requested component;

an upgrade manager executing on the first computer, the upgrade manager configured to transmit information about the system resources of the first computer to the second computer; and

an upgrade handler executing on the second computer, the upgrade handler configured to transmit the location of one or more installable components from the second computer to the first computer based upon the at least one requested component and the system resources of the first computer.

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14. The computer system of Claim 13, wherein the configuration file is formatted for access by the upgrade handler.

15. The computer system of Claim 13, wherein the configuration file has an associated expiration time.

16. The computer system of Claim 13, wherein the upgrade manager retrieves the configuration file without parsing contents of the configuration file and wherein the upgrade manager transmits the configuration file to the upgrade handler.

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17. The computer system of Claim 13, wherein the upgrade manager parses the content of the of the configuration file and transmits the content to the upgrade handler.

5 18. The computer system of Claim 13, additionally comprising a network, the first computer being in operable communication with the second computer via the network.

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19. A system for installing one or more components on a client computer, the system including:

a network;

10 a client computer operably connected to the network, the client computer identifying one or more client conditions;

a configuration file identifying at least one of the components; and

15 a component server for receiving the client conditions and the configuration file from the client computer, the component server identifying the location of one or more components based upon the components identified by the configuration file and the client conditions.

20. A system for selecting components for installation on a computer, the system comprising:

20 means for receiving a request for the upgrade of one or more components;

means for determining one or more system conditions regarding the computer; and

means for identifying one or more components based upon the request and the system conditions.

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21. The system of Claim 20, additionally comprising means for receiving a configuration file that is associated with the request for the upgrade, the configuration file identifying one or more components to be upgraded.

22. The system of Claim 21, additionally including means for associating an expiration time with the configuration file.

30 23. The system of Claim 22, additionally comprising:

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means for determining whether the expiration time indicates that the configuration file has expired; and

means for stopping the means for identification upon a determination that the configuration file has expired.

5 24. The method of Claim 21, additionally comprising means for sending the configuration file to a component server, the component server including the means for identifying.

10 25. The system of Claim 21, additionally comprising means for sending at least some of the contents of the configuration file to a component server, the component server including the means for identifying.

26. The system of Claim 21, additionally comprising means for storing the configuration file on a configuration server.

27. The system of Claim 20, wherein the system conditions include the existence of one or more computer-readable modules on the computer.

15 28. The system of Claim 20, wherein the system conditions include a language that is associated with one or more computer-readable modules that reside on the computer.

29. The system of Claim 20, wherein the system conditions include the type of operating system that is executing on the computer.

20 30. The system of Claim 20, additionally comprising means for identifying one or more program files upon receiving the request, the one or more program files being associated with at least one of said one or more components.

31. A configuration file identifying one or more components for installation on a client computer, the configuration file comprising:

25 a plurality of component identifiers, each of the component identifiers identifying at least one of said one or more components; and

an expiration time identifying a time by which the components must be installed in the client computer.

30 32. A method of selecting components for installation on a computer, the method comprising the acts of:

receiving a request for the upgrade of one or more components; and

identifying one or more components for installation on the computer

based upon the request and the system conditions of the computer.

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33. The method of Claim 32, additionally comprising the act of receiving a configuration file that is associated with the request for the upgrade, the configuration file identifying said one or more components.

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34. The method of Claim 32, additionally including the act of associating an expiration time with the configuration file.

35. The method of Claim 34, additionally comprising the acts of:
determining whether the expiration time indicates that the configuration file has expired; and

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stopping the identification step upon the determination that the configuration has expired.

36. The method of Claim 33, additionally comprising the act of sending the configuration file to a component server, the component server performing the identifying step.

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37. The method of Claim 33, additionally comprising the act of sending at least some of the contents of the configuration file to a component server, the component server performing the identifying step.

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38. A system for selecting components for installing, the system comprising:
a client computer having a processor, a computer-readable storage medium and data communication subsystem; and

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an upgrade manager executing on the client computer, wherein the upgrade manager retrieves via the data communication subsystem a configuration file identifying one or more components, wherein the upgrade manager stores the configuration file in the computer-readable storage medium, and wherein the upgrade manager identifies one or more client conditions that are associated with the client computer, and wherein the upgrade manager generates an upgrade request that includes the contents of the configuration file and the client conditions.

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39. A system for selecting components for installation, the system comprising:

a server computer having a processor, a computer-readable storage medium and data communication subsystem; and

an upgrade handler residing in the computer-readable storage medium and executing on the server computer, the upgrade handler configured to identify the location of one or more components upon receiving via the data communication subsystem one or more system conditions of a client computer.

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40. A system for identifying components for installation, the system comprising:

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a configuration server having a processor, a computer-readable storage medium and data communication subsystem; and

a configuration file maintained by the configuration server on the computer-readable storage medium, the configuration file identifying one or more components for installation on a client computer, the configuration file comprising:

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a plurality of component identifiers, each of the component identifiers identifying at least one of said one or more components; and
an expiration time identifying a time by which the components must be installed in the client computer,

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wherein the configuration server transmits the configuration file via the data communication subsystem to a client computer upon a user request for the configuration file.

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